# engl 303: multimedia writing

CRN 82917 | Tuesday/Thursday 2.30-3.45 | Colson Hall G18

## course overview:

English 303 introduces you to the fundamental rhetorical theories, principles, and practices of multimedia design, implementation, and publishing. The main goal of this course is for you to heighten your understanding of critical theories of multimedia, with a particular emphasis on visual rhetoric and networked environments. Since multimedia is, by nature, interactive, we will cover the rhetorical nature of interactivity, the relationship of the audience—or users—to texts, and innovative methods for successfully connecting with others through multimedia.

This particular section explores the connections between different stages of composition, focusing primarily on the processes of distribution and circulation, and their digital, social, and material effects on our lives. We live in a networked society, which means that we are exposed to hundreds of texts over the span of a day. As a result, we must develop skills of recognition, interpretation, and creation that are intuitive and effective for our purposes. By exploring the ways that texts spread through digital (and sometimes more traditional) means, we can better understand our own efforts to share information with one another in our academic, personal, and professional lives.

Ultimately, it is my hope that this semester will bring all of us a greater understanding of how digital and material worlds collide, and help us to make ethical, informed decisions when we communicate with one another in digital and physical spaces.

## course goals and means:

➢ Gain experience in the design and creation of digital texts, while learning about design principles, user experience, and interface guidelines, via use of creation platforms;
➢ Cultivate theoretical knowledge of multimedia and digital scholarship, by reading recent work in relevant academic fields and applying these ideas through discussion, activities, and writing;
➢ Develop awareness of the material implications of digital platforms, by theorizing, researching, and mapping the relationships between users, technologies, and networks, as well as considering ethical questions that have emerged as a result of digital circulation;
➢ Evaluate rhetorical effectiveness of multimedia artifacts, by analyzing a wide variety of different multimedia artifacts, as well as creating your own; and
➢ Engage in research and collaboration in digital spaces, through the use of emergent research methodologies like iconographic tracking.

## section information:
**instructor:** Dr. Erin Brock Carlson, Assistant Professor of English
**email:** erin.carlson@mail.wvu.edu
**mix email** (for sharing large files)**:** ebc00001@mix.wvu.edu
**office location:** Colson Hall 337
**office hours:** Tuesdays 10-12; Wednesdays 12-2; and by appointment

## required materials:

There is **no assigned textbook** for this class. Instead, you will receive all of your readings through eCampus. However, you will need access to and a willingness to develop an understanding for the following technologies to succeed in the course:

➢ Mac OSX (our computer lab is a Mac lab), **or** the ability to bring your own **reliable** device each day

➢ eCampus, because that's where readings/assignments will be located

➢ Various other programs, chosen collaboratively by you, your peers, and myself

## major assignments:

Each unit is made up of several components, including shorter writing assignments and the final product. Everything we do in this class will help you with putting together your final project, so missing major components **does** lower your overall unit grade. English 303 does not have a final examination.

**unit one: user experience in digital & physical spaces** 15%

Our introductory unit will lead us into the major ideas of the class, exploring the impact of platforms, digital distribution and circulation, and rhetorical design on user experience. You will complete a short rhetorical analysis and accompany visual comparison assignment on user experience.

**unit two: networked text creation** 20%

Given the networked nature of our world, this unit will focus explicitly on the role that networks play on our composition and distribution patterns. You will develop two different multimodal texts on the same topic, using different technologies: one you are comfortable with and one that you want to become more familiar with; and write a short analysis of your experience.

**unit three: remix and video production** 20%

This unit will allow you to delve more deeply into one particular form of media, videos, in order to explore all of the stages of creation and distribution of such texts, from planning to creating to sharing. This unit also introduces the concepts of remix and remediation, as well as intellectual property.

**unit four: iconographic tracking project** 25%

In order to bring together the major themes of the course, you will finish up the semester by exploring the conditions that can create widely circulated, viral artifacts that pervade our everyday lives. You will interrogate the cultural, societal, and material circumstances that allow and prevent these circulation patterns. You will have the option to complete this as a group project, working in groups of up to 4.

**reading responses & in-class activities** 15%

You will be responsible for keeping up with the readings in the class, some of which are admittedly dense and theory-based. I will regularly assign reading responses to direct your attention to a particular aspect of these readings. I expect you to write 300-500 words in response to the reading, but you may focus on any aspect or idea within the reading that interests you. When there are not reading responses assigned, we will engage with the reading in other ways: short, in-class writings, activities, and exercises—and potentially reading quizzes, if I see a need for them.

**discussion leading** 5%
Once during the semester, you will be asked to lead a discussion on a reading with a group of your peers. In leading the discussion, I will ask you to provide a brief summary of the reading, an activity that will lead the class to a better understanding of the reading and its applications, and a set of discussion questions to further address content. You should plan for your discussion to take up about 30 minutes of class. **The day you lead discussion you will not have to turn in a reading response.**

## grading:

| letter grade | range | letter grade | range | letter grade | range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A+ | 100-98% | B- | 83-80% | D | 67-64% |
| A | 97-94% | C+ | 79-78% | D- | 63-60% |
| A- | 93-90% | C | 77-74% | F | Less than 60% |
| B+ | 89-88% | C- | 73-70% | | |
| B | 87-84% | D+ | 69-68% | | |

Specific criteria and rubrics for each major assignment will be explained and developed in class. However, all of the writing you produce in this course should: meet the requirements of the specific project, be well-informed and thoughtful, be respectful of audience, be grammatically and stylistically sound, and be rhetorically effective for its intended purpose.

In compliance with relevant privacy laws (FERPA), I must I discuss grades with you in confidence. This means I cannot email grades to you, nor can I talk about grades with you in front of others (e.g. in the hallway after class); please come to my office hours for this purpose. I post grades on eCampus regularly, so you can also keep track of them there.

## course policies:
### attendance and tardiness
As an upper-level course, this class requires a high level of engagement and participation. However, I do allow you to have **three absences** during the semester (which is equivalent to more than a full week of class, so I'm being generous here). These absences can be used at your discretion, and do not negatively affect your grade—given that you don't miss a day you present, or the day of a peer review. After the fourth absence, your final letter graded will be lowered one step—i.e., from a B to a B-. If you miss **more than seven classes** (barring extreme situations), you will automatically fail the course. Absences for bereavement, extended illnesses, university-sanctioned events, religious holidays, military training or deployment, or for other circumstances that I agree are unavoidable, will **not** count against this total, provided that you go through the proper channels and clear these absences with me **in writing** (via email) as soon as you can.

Being late to class is disruptive to my teaching and your learning, as well as the experience of your classmates. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be marked as absent; if you are consistently late, I will request a meeting with you to address the issue.

## engagement

This classroom will be run like a work environment, meaning that you will have a fair amount of freedom. With that freedom comes the expectation that you will be not only physically present, but mentally present, and ready to work in class. I also expect you to use technology (computers, phones, etc.) with care and consideration for others—any failure to do so will be reflected in your in-class grade.

## late work and technological difficulties

I set deadlines for a reason – to help you be better students and me be a better teacher. This class is modeled after real work environments, where deadlines matter. An assignment is considered late when it is not submitted by the time and in the manner specified, in class or on eCampus. That being said, in professional environments, you may ask for an extension on your deadlines. An approved extension will not affect your grade, but do not over use this professional courtesy. Additionally, if you submit an assignment late, you will not get the same amount of written feedback. **If you do not email me to ask for an extension before the due date, your late work will not be accepted.**

Additionally, lost files, crashed computers, or other technical difficulties will not be considered a legitimate excuse for late work. This class, as its title implies, requires you to be engaged in digital spaces. Because computer problems are a fact of life, always try to complete your assignments early and ALWAYS save your work in multiple places (e.g., USB, Dropbox, etc.).

## academic integrity

Dishonesty is not accepted here, and will definitely not be accepted in the workplace. For more information visit the WVU [Academic Standards Policy](). All academic honesty violations will result in a failing grade of 1% for the assignment and likely, the course.  If you have questions, please come and talk to me before an assignment is due.

## accommodations and accessibility

I strive to make my courses as accessible and accommodating to all persons as I can. If you require any specific accommodations, please send me an email within the first week of the term in order to discuss any necessary adjustments. For more information, consult the [Office of Accessibility Services]().

## professional conduct

I take seriously the need to provide a respectful and supportive environment in our classroom. You are expected to behave professionally in class and out of class (this includes while corresponding through email), and to treat everyone in our community with kindness and respect. I have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment in all forms.

## basic needs

Any student who faces challenges securing their food, housing, or other elements of wellbeing, and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess and to try and connect you to others.

| week | readings | writing due | notes |
|------|----------|-------------|-------|
| **1,** begins 8/19 | | | |
| **2,** begins 8/26 | Losh & Alexander Norman | Unit 1 Proposal | Sign up for discussion leading by 8/30 |
| **3,** begins 9/2 | Beck Maron, Ely, Stone | RR #1 UX Analysis | |
| **4,** begins 9/9 | Arola | RR #2 Data Analysis, Map | |
| **5,** begins 9/16 | Porter | RR #3 | Conferences 9/17 No Class |
| **6,** begins 9/23 | Sheridan et al. Typography readings | RR #4 Unit 2 Plans | |
| **7,** begins 9/30 | Tech Crunch reading | Unit 2 Drafts | |
| **8,** begins 10/7 | Stedman | RR #5 Unit 2 Finals | 10/10 No Class |
| **9,** begins 10/14 | | Unit 3 Proposal | 10/17 No Class |
| **10,** begins 10/21 | Copyright Articles | Storyboard Tutorial | |
| **11,** begins 10/28 | | Unit 3 Draft | |
| **12,** begins 11/4 | Marantz Edwards | RR #6 Unit 3 Final | |
| **13,** begins 11/11 | Gries | Case Study RR #7 | |
| **14,** begins 11/18 | Gries | Data Set | |
| **15,** begins 11/25 | | | Thxgiving Break No Class |
| **16,** begins 12/2 | | Data Patterns Status Update Memo | |
| **17,** begins 12/9 | | Unit 4 Drafts/Finals | 12/12 Presentations |